



SB 803 – Heal Our Heroes Act

SUMMARY

SB 803 creates a narrowly tailored pilot program to allow military veterans and first responders to access psilocybin and psilocyn for mental health treatment in a regulated setting.

BACKGROUND

Current law lists psilocyn and psilocybin, as Schedule I Drugs. According to the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Schedule I Drugs have “no accepted medical use and high potential for abuse.” However, there is a growing body of credible evidence to show that when used under a proper regulated program, psychedelics can help reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD. A recent publication in the Journal for the American Medical Association found “Psilocybin treatment was associated with a clinically significant sustained reduction in depressive symptoms and functional disability, without serious adverse events.” In both 2018 and 2019, the FDA designated psilocybin as a “Breakthrough Therapy,” which expedites the development and review of drugs that demonstrate substantial improvement over available therapy for a serious condition. There have been many well-documented reports of veterans and first responders finding benefits from the use of psychedelics in a supportive environment. As the public is hearing more about the promising research for psychedelics, surveys indicate that the use of psychedelics is rising, and many Californians are seeking psychedelics from underground sources in unregulated contexts. Because we lack a system with safety mechanisms and robust public health education, the number of people seeking help because of adverse psychedelic experiences has increased. Psychedelics are powerful substances, and encouraging safer practices is paramount.

PROBLEM

Veterans and first responders face issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder at staggering rates. According to the [Department of Veteran Affairs’ 2022 National Veteran Suicide](#)

[Prevention Annual Report](#), 16.8 military veterans commit suicide every day. They are not getting the help they need from existing health care options. Some are seeking out psychedelics due to their promising healing potential. However, without a regulated process to access psychedelic assisted treatment in California, many are going abroad to access psychedelics or seeking out underground psychedelic facilitators and using unregulated substances.

SOLUTION

SB 803 authorizes San Francisco, Santa Cruz, and San Diego counties to run a pilot program to offer treatment using psilocybin or psilocyn to military veterans or first responders. The counties will be responsible for authorizing the facilitators who must be a licensed physician or surgeon, clinical psychologist, licensed clinical social worker, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, licensed professional clinical counselor, or a naturopathic doctor. The pilot sunsets after three years and requires data collection and reporting at the two year mark. The program includes several safety measures, such as requiring a suitability screening for each participant to ensure they are a safe candidate for treatment.

SPONSORS

Heroic Hearts Project
Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP)
Veterans Exploring Treatment Solution (VETS)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Zoe Johnson, Senator Becker
Zoe.Johnson@sen.ca.gov
(916) 651- 4013

Danielle Parsons, Senator Jones
Danielle.Parsons@sen.ca.gov
(916) 651-4040